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DANTE'S PARADISO: CANTO I

TRANSLATED BY KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

THE following version is as literal as the translator can make it, having regard to the verse form and to poetical effect. Each line has four stresses, some of which are marked with a sign.

Dante, led by Beatrice, ascends into heaven. They take off from the Garden of Eden, which is on the top of the Mountain of Purgatory, in the southern ocean at the antipodes to Jerusalem. This fact is referred to in II. 43-45. The time is near the spring equinox.

The Universe glows with the glory of God,
poured down everywhere, penetrating,
splendidly various, áll póints.

Where the light is clearest I have climbed,
and seen such things unveiled as neither
mind can mirror now nor mouth express;
because the racing intellect's increasing
ecstasy takes it so far forward,
it utterly outstrips remembrance.

10 And yet such trace of the holy region's
treasure as I retain must be my
theme in the singing that now begins.

O for this final task, great Apollo,¹
fit me with fiery powers, no less than
promise the precious leaves of the laurel!

Only one of the Muses' mountains²
sufficed me till now; but now on doubled
help from the hills my wrestling reckons!

20 Enter me! Be Your breath within my
spirit such music as drew Marsyas
sheer from the sheath of his shivering limbs!³
Ah divine Master, if You grant me

1 God.

2 The two peaks of Parnassus.

3 The satyr Marsyas challenged Apollo to a musical match: he was beaten and skinned for the presumption.

strength and speech enough to express
 the shadow of bliss my brain yet bears,
 You will see me come to the laurel at last,
 and take the longed for leafy crown,
 Your fiery gift and my theme befitting!

Father, so rarely the plucked laurel

glitters in glory to poet or Caesar—

30 shame on the weakling wills of men!—
 that redoubled joy must leap to the delighting
 god of Delphos, out of the branches
 Peneian, when anyone burns to win them.

Fine sparks blaze into conflagration,

and, after mine, perhaps to yet greater
 song may resound the Cirran mountain!⁴

Always the point of sunrise varies
 to mortal eyes, but where four circles
 intersecting form three crosses,

40 with a sweeter strength the sun rises,

and warmer stars, and more to its measure
 it knits and kneads the waxing earth.⁵

Near to this point had the morning risen

yonder, and evening here, and white
 was all that half-world, and darkness this,

when I saw Beatrice, turned to the left,

look straight into the sun; no eagle
 ever there held its eyes so still.

And as a shaft of light is reflected

50 to form a new beam's leaping reversal,
 turned like a pilgrim homeward, so
 her attitude flashed through my eyes to form
 an image inward, whence rose in me
 marvellous strength to stare at the sun!

Much may our human powers do yonder
 passing the dreams of those who mourn
 the country created for human kind.

I could not endure it long, yet enough

I glimpsed, to see it glitter around

⁴ Cirrha, a peak of Parnassus sacred to Apollo.

⁵ The four circles are the celestial equator, the zodiac, the equinoctial colure and the horizon. At their point of intersection the sun rises in the spring equinox.

- 60 like boiling iron that flows from flame:
and suddenly then the daylight doubled,
light upon light, as if some Power
had set in the sky a second sun!
With eyes intent upon the eternal
sphere was Beatrice, and I to hers
my own eyes turned and fixed intently.
Gazing at her then I changed within me,
and became like Glaucus, when he tasted
grass that made him the sea-gods' kin.⁶
- 70 Words cannot say what it is to pass
beyond humanity: suffice then the symbol,
expecting from grace experience.
Love, if I was but what You latest
lifted, O star-swayer, into existence,
You, whose light now raised me, know!⁷
Then, as the spheres You build with everlasting
longing recalled my wits with music,⁸
mingling to Your wisdom's measure,
I saw such spaces of sky afire
- 80 in the flame of the sun, not rain or river
ever outstretched a flood so wide.
The sudden sound and the grand brilliance
set me on fire to know their reason—
ah the strange keenness of that need!—
So she who saw me as I myself,
opened her mouth to still my shaken
spirit, before I mine to beg,
and began: 'Your erring imagination
makes you dull and prevents your seeing
what you would see if you shook it aside.
- 90 You are not now on earth, as you suppose,
and lightning never fled so fast
its place as you fly back to yours.'
No sooner from one doubt was I loosed,
by the light and lovely little words,

6 The fisherman Glaucus saw a fish revive on eating a certain weed; ate it himself and turned into a sea-god.

7 Cf. 2 *Corinthians* xii, 2-3: 'whether in the body or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth.' The part of the human being created last ('latest') is the rational soul.

8 The music of the spheres: cf. Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* V, i.

than into another's net I ran;
 and I said: 'That great astonishment
 frets me no more; but now I marvel
 how over these light things I am lifted'.

100 Sighed she gently at first, then turned her
 eyes to me, as a mother looks
 at her little fever-dreaming son:
 then spoke again: 'A many-folded,
 single order forever forms
 the Universe into a mirror of God.

Therein the sovereign creatures follow
 the footprints of the eternal Good,
 to Whom, as end, that order moves.

And drawn within that order onward
 110 to various endings, every nature
 turns to its Origin, near or far.

Thus voyaging over the sea of being
 to this port or that port, to each is given
 a piloting longing that leads it on.

Thus does fire leap at the moon,
 Thus life throbs in hearts of flesh,
 Thus earth's weight is welded in one.

Nor do mindless creatures only
 fly from this bow, its arrows too
 120 are beings with love and intellect.

Providence, all disposing sweetly,
 poises in light that land forever
 within which whirls the swiftest sphere.⁹

Thither now, as to a mark determined,
 smites us that bow-string's strength, which always
 sends its shaft to a happy target.

True, as in art, the form so often
 is out of tune with the mind's intention,
 because the dull material drags,

130 so from this course that creature sometimes
 swerves, which ever is free to go
 its own way, though impelled to this
 (think how even fire may fall
 sheer from the clouds!), if its first upleaping

⁹ The Empyrean Heaven, containing the Primum Mobile.

twist awry to a false delight.
 If this be all true, you should no more marvel
 at your rising than at a mountain
 torrent tumbling down the valley.
 A marvel it were if you, unhindered,
 140 stayed at rest instead below,
 as, flat on the floor, a living flame.'
 Then she turned again to the Light her eyes.

ANTONIO ROSMINI ON THE MAGNIFICAT

ROBERT SENCOURT

IN 1955 Italy in general and the province of Novara in particular have been celebrating the Centenary of the death of Antonio Rosmini. While some point to his sagacious views on the Risorgimento, and others turn back to his philosophy which anticipated the revival of Thomism, others venerate him as the founder of the Institute of Charity and a master of the spiritual life.

His work in this direction was indeed inspiring: and one could hardly find a better example of it than what he wrote on the *Magnificat* for his Convent at Domodossola, that the nuns might recite it with fuller attention, deeper faith and fuller joy. The essay gains in interest when we know that he wrote it in 1849 after he had failed in a negotiation with Pius IX who had felt compelled to flee from Rome and who then turned against the conciliatory policy he had shared with Rosmini, allowed his works to be attacked, and refused the Cardinalate he had previously offered. None of these disappointments shook the profound spiritual life of Rosmini.

Apart from the Mass and Benediction there is little in Catholic worship better known than the *Magnificat*. Rosmini writes of it nevertheless in a way to unveil significances which come to most as a surprise. He finds in the famous canticle, a compendium of ancient prophecy and of Church history: in it is the pith of the

Gospel wisdom with praise for the result. He arrived at these conclusions from studying it from the beginning to the end:

Soul, he reminds us is the principle of our natural life as spirit is that of our supernatural life. The Virgin's soul saw the greatness of the Lord because her very body was made his temple. But it was rather her *spirit* which was infused with celestial joy; with her soul she addressed herself to the Father while with her spirit she turned to the Son, her Saviour; for she was the first to rejoice in his salvation. In these words, too, she confessed her faith in his divinity—He was, in the psalmist's expression, her God and her Saviour. And when she added that he regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden, her thoughts ran down to the depths of her own nothingness at the same time as she felt herself to be immeasurably exalted.

'And now', continues Rosmini, 'now begins the magnificent prediction by which the Queen of Prophets, having drawn aside the veil of the future and looked beyond, proclaimed all that God, her Saviour and her Son was to accomplish in sanctifying men, in changing the face of the earth. 'All generations shall call me blessed.' Century after century proves the literal truth of that prophecy. 'Blessed' is the actual word which generation after generation applies to the Virgin-Mother. And what is blessedness? It is the effect and the reward of the purest holiness. But the holiness and the blessedness of Mary were the special gift of God Almighty; and never was he mightier than in the prerogative with which he endowed her. As Rosmini so exactly says: 'The Incarnation wrought in Mary was the greatest of all the divine works, because it was greater than the actual creation. And the Incarnation did not end in itself: it aimed at the sanctification of the world which is the object of the divine designs. It is achieved first through the Incarnation of the Son of God and then through the Holy Ghost proceeding from him to endue us with heavenly grace; and this gift of sanctifying grace is not for a period only; it is continued from generation to generation through God's love and mercy.' Its one condition is that souls should fear God: 'To fear God with that just fear which prompts men to refrain from sin is the beginning of greater mercies. And so Mary stood between the old and the new dispensations. She was, as it were, the last of the patriarchs—she was the first of her Saviour's disciples. In her culminated the mercy of the old dispensation;

in her was inaugurated the far greater mercies of the new

Rosmini proceeds to show how at this point the *Magnificat* reaches to vast new ideas, to new ranges of history. At that time great evils were afflicting the world. Like blind leading blind so did the perverted wisdom of the world lead men astray. Tyranny was rampant, slaves treated vilely. In addition to false wisdom and arrogant power, there was misused wealth, misused by men who having no compassion for the poor, lived for every kind of luxury.

It was for the Gospel of Christ to change all this, and the prophetic spirit of the Virgin enabled both to foresee and to figure forth the message her Son was to proclaim to men. She felt its efficacy, she proclaimed its results. In the *Magnificat*, the pride of paganism is already overthrown: 'He hath shewed strength with his arm' but the arm of God is the Son of God. 'Arise, arise', so Isaiah had written, 'put on strength O Thou arm of the Lord arise as in the days of old, in the ancient generations—and they that are redeemed by the Lord shall return and shall come into Sion, singing praises, and joy everlasting shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning shall flee away.' Such is the beautiful text which Rosmini uses to amplify the verse which spoke of the strength in the arm of the Lord.

When our Lady sang 'He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts', she prophesied the overthrow of despots, the downfall of tyranny; and, proceeds Rosmini, she saw new nations arise, nations composed of those whom baptism, by regenerating, made submissive to the laws of meekness and of brotherhood preached by the Redeemer. The mighty were put down, the humble exalted, while charity gathered to its bosom the poor and the wretched, filling the hungry with good things.

Here we see how the *Magnificat* anticipates the beatitudes. Blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek, blessed are the sorrowful, blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, blessed are they who are reviled and persecuted, with all manner of evil spoken against them. All these pronouncements, with all the changes of value they imply are already shadowed forth in the *Magnificat* of Mary. 'Long before her divine Son had preached the doctrine to others', wrote Rosmini, 'he had revealed it to his

beloved Mother, infused it into her heart, and yielded to her the honour of first proclaiming it.' She felt its efficacy and saw its application in herself at the same time as she expressed with skill and brevity a new dispensation for the world.

For how much history is condensed into her words. The successors of St Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, were to reign in Rome when those of Augustus had departed and had fallen. Slaves were to be freed, prisoners to be treated more humanely, orphans and widows provided for, the poor sheltered, institutes of charity and benevolence founded, misery widely alleviated; wherever the impulses of humanity and charity improve the lot of men and do away with exaggerated inequalities, we find a fulfilment of the *Magnificat*. In it is a programme for the reform of the world which, though carried on for approaching two thousand years, still has to reach out to the perfection of human society.

Even in the reference to Israel, Rosmini sees a hope that Jew and Gentile should be united, though not before the fullness of time. For God's mercy to Abraham was not to be quickly fulfilled: ages might pass first; but it was to last *forever*.

So it is shown how the *Magnificat* gradually unfolds the history of the Church throughout the centuries at the same time as it offers the Virgin's thanks for the Incarnation and provides a song of praise for every evening hour. Its reference to those that fear God is, as we saw, one with its insistence on God's mercy which is itself love descending from on high, till fear is merged in love; and then though it still retains whatever it had of affection, it loses the sense of dread and takes the form of reverence, of sacrifice, of a song of praise which ascribes all honour and glory to God alone. So Rosmini unlocks the secret of the *Magnificat* in unlocking his own which was a constant insistence on love. Divine Wisdom, he says, is a wisdom of the heart. It is not cold, like human learning, or vain theory, or prying of the intellect. It is all ardour, all life, all love; since God himself is love.

Such, then, is Rosmini's exegesis of the *Magnificat*. Well might he hope that it would lead those who recited the familiar words to do so with close attention, deeper faith and fuller joy.

EXPOSITION

ARTHUR VALENTIN

THUNDER voices prefaced the breaking of the four seals in John's heavenly visions, but prior to the sounding of the seven trumpets and the blaze of fire on the heavenly altar 'there was silence in heaven'. So, silence issues forth in trumpet calls and in the angelic prayer-action at the altar alight with flame. All public worship expresses itself vocally, for only such prayer can express corporate worship and fellowship prayer; but the Catholic Church has devised a service of silence, just as she has produced Orders of Silence, and that service is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Rite begins with the *O Salutaris*; it ends with the *Tantum ergo*, but the interspace is Silence. The High Priest, Heli, was an unwise father but wise as a spiritual director, for how great was his wisdom when he bade the child Samuel respond to the voice of God with these words: 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' Here is the perfect counsel for those who kneel before the Host exposed. All is silence: the Word is silent; silently the candles immolate themselves in honour of the Unseen Light; the flowers praise their Creator by their beauty and fragrance, but silent is their tribute.

Silence is the soul's receptive mood; it is the 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' When we say prayers, God listens to us; but when we are silent we become listeners to the voice of God. This is not only an affair of the soul but one deeply affecting the body, our brain and nerves. Silence is the lubricating oil of both soul and body, and for want of it we have friction in the workings of our whole being. We of the priesthood, like the angels, have to sound the trumpet of preaching, but before the trumpet can sound the instrumentalist must inhale a deep breath, otherwise the note sounded will be feeble. Perhaps this is why our preaching is not more effective and fails to penetrate the souls of our hearers. Our first concern should be to let our Lord breathe upon us, as he breathed upon the apostles in the Upper Room, and this he will do only when we are silent before him.

Silence creates calm. Look at, say, factory workers today. They live in a din of noise, the crash of machinery, and so their

ragged nerves must be doped with cigarettes one after another. We can get immersed in spiritual noise and bustle, and our nerves demand this and that sedative to quieten them. Carthusians and Cistercians do not find any need to dope their nerves with nicotine! Yet they have nerves, and are men as we are. All well-formed religious have this in common: all have a stillness and silence about them: each can say: 'My house is now at rest'.

We in the world, whether clerical or lay, deeply need formation in spiritual silence as an antidote to the noise of modern life. Those of us fortunate enough to live in the countryside know how nature has this note of silence and contemplation, just as the city is concentrated din. Exposition is comparatively of the modern world, this world of the age of noise, and it may well be for many souls their one effective means for growing strong and spiritually healthy. The adoring soul may not be conscious of any particular experience when in the Hidden Presence, but the influence of our Lord is at work all the time, and there is taking place what we may call spiritual reconditioning, just as after a holiday we usually realize the good it has done us when we come back to our normal conditions.

So, Exposition is a liturgy of silence in a world of rush and noise; the heavenly silence before the trumpets can sound with full resonance; the silence which causes the altar of prayer to blaze up and kindle the incense of our worship and prayer. The silent soul before the silent Host is learning how to master the language of heaven.



THE NATURE OF ACCIDIE¹

JOHN CASSIAN (A.D. 360-448)

WHEN the vice of Accidie has got hold of an unhappy man's mind, it breeds detestation of the place of his habitation, weariness of his cell, and makes him spurn and despise the brethren who live with him, or near him, as all neglectful and unspiritual. For every task to be done within the

¹ A synopsis made by Charles Williamson from W. B. Trevelyan's translation of Cassian's *Institutes*—A Master of the Desert. Readings from John Cassian; with kind permission of the publisher, The Faith Press Ltd.

confines of his dwelling, it makes him slow and indolent. It will not let him either rest in his cell or give himself to reading. Oftentimes will he groan that he had dwelt there so long, and made no progress in good nor acquired any spiritual fruit, so long as he is bound in that fellowship. He depicts the fellowship of the brethren elsewhere as sweet and full of spiritual converse. On the other hand, all that he has near about him is hard and difficult, and he says that not only is there no edification in the brethren among whom he dwells, but also that the very necessities of life can only be there obtained with immense toil. Lastly, he tells us that if he remain where he is, his salvation will be impossible; he must leave his cell; if he remain in it both he and it will perish together; he must take himself off as speedily as possible. Then the fifth or the sixth hour inflicts him with weariness of body, and such appetite for food that he seems as if he had just come from a long journey or was worn out with terrific toil, or as if he had not taken food after a two or three days' fast. Then, again, he looks anxiously about him and sighs to think that none of the brethren ever pay him a visit. Time after time he goes out and comes in again, he keeps looking at the sun as though it were too tardily going to its setting. Thus, as if beset by an unreasonable confusion of mind, he is, as it were, filled with a dark mist, and rendered useless and unprofitable for every spiritual exercise. It is as though he thinks that no other remedy can be found for such distress save a visit from one of the brethren, and to go and see the sick, be they near or far. It is, he would say, a higher duty to apply oneself to pious work of this sort than to remain in the cell without spiritual fruit, and without progress in perfection.

THE WRONG REMEDY

Thus the unhappy soul, attacked by such devices of its enemies, is driven along until wearied out by the spirit of accidie as by some most powerful battering ram, it learns to fall into slumber or breaks forth from the cell and acquires the habit of seeking relief from these attacks by visiting one of the brethren, being rendered shortly afterwards still weaker by the remedy that helps it for the present. Thus the soldier of Christ becomes a fugitive and a deserter; he 'entangleth himself in the affairs of this life' (2 Tim. 2. 4), never to gain the approval of him to whom he is engaged.

Whenever, indeed, accidie in any manner begins to get the better of a man, it either makes him stay idle in his cell, or drives him out therefrom, inconstant henceforth, and a gadder about, useless for any work; it makes him wander into the cells of the brethren one after another, or about the monasteries with no other end in view than to find somewhere, on any pretext, an opportunity of obtaining a meal. For the mind of the idler cannot occupy itself with any other thoughts than of food, and eating, until it find somewhere or other companionship in a man or woman in whom is equal lukewarmness, and gets mixed up in their affairs and private business, and so becomes, step by step, caught to such a degree in a net of harmful occupations, that, as though enveloped in a serpent's coils, the man can never free himself any more, so as to attain the perfection to which he was vowed.

RESISTANCE NOT FLIGHT, AS THE CURE

At the beginning of my sojourn in the desert, when I told Abbot Moses,—the holiest man of them all,—that on the previous day I had been most seriously smitten with the disease of accidie, and that I could not get rid of it save by an immediate visit to Abbot Paul, he said to me, 'Nay, thou hast not got rid of this disease, but hast thou rather shown thyself its subject and slave. Henceforth the adversary will the more hardly attack thee as a deserter and runaway whom he has observed conquered in the fight and at once taking to his heels, unless in future when battle is joined thou art ready not to quit thy cell, or to turn to slumber, in order to escape the blast of his attack for a brief moment, but to learn rather to sustain his onslaught and to fight through to triumph'. Thus it is proved by experience that the fight with accidie is not to be escaped by refusal to face it, but can only be successful by resistance.

All the evils of this sickness are aptly summed up in one verse by David, when he says 'My soul hath slumbered through heaviness' (Ps. 118. 28 LXX.), that is to say, from accidie. He says well that it is the soul, not the body, that has slumbered. Truly, indeed, does the soul slumber, which has been wounded by the dart of this disturbing malady, from all contemplation of virtue and from all insight into spiritual things.

And so, let the true athlete of Christ, who desires to fight well

in the battle for perfection, hasten to cast out this disease from the hidden places of his soul, and let him so fight against this most wicked spirit of accidie, both on the one side and on the other, that he fall not smitten down by the dart of sleep, not yet driven out from his monastery precinct, abscond like a deserter—albeit under some specious pretext of pious excuse.

THE TRUE REMEDY

The blessed Apostle, as a true physician of the soul, seeing this disease which arises from the spirit of accidie either spreading itself even in his day, or else knowing by revelation of the Holy Ghost that it would soon show itself abroad, does all he can to forestall it with the salutary remedies of his precepts. For, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, first, as some wise and accomplished physician soothing the infirmity of his patients with words of tender and gentle balm, and beginning with expressions of love and praise until such remedies have soothed the deadly wound and made it more susceptible of potent medicaments, he goes on to say, 'But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another' (I Thess. 4. 9, 10). And at length with difficulty he breaks out into that which he was trying to express: 'Study to be quiet'. Having said the first precept, he then delivers a second, 'and to do your won business', then a third, 'and to work with your hands even as we charged you', and then follow the reasons, 'that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing.' Regard well this delay, how he interposes so many preliminaries before he brings the thought of his heart to birth: 'Study to be quiet'—that is to say, Abide in your cells and be not disturbed with the variety of gossips which arises from the projects and tales of the idle, and ye shall not involve others also in a like disturbance. And, Do your own business, not by your inquisitiveness into worldly affairs, and by prying out the way of life of this man or that, giving your diligence not to the amendment of your own conduct, or to the pursuit of virtue, but to carping at the brethren. This precept he gives in order that they may heed the warning given above. 'Work with your hands as we have charged you.' Idleness is the reason, he clearly tells us, why those things come to pass which he has blamed above. For no one can be either restless, or busied

in other men's affairs, save one who is not content to be diligent in the work of his own hands. He mentions also another malady which takes its rise from this very idleness, that is, when they walk not honourably saying, 'That ye may walk honestly towards them that are without.'

Lastly, those very persons whom the Apostle in his First Epistle had treated with gentle blandishments of words, now, as they had made no progress under these milder remedies in his Second Epistle, he tries to heal with certain sharper and more caustic medicaments. No longer does he preface soothing or mild phrases no longer those tender or kindly words like 'We beseech you, brethren', but now, 'We adjure you, brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly' (2 Thess. 3. 6, 7). In the one place he beseeches, here he adjures. There he shows the affection of kindness, here the severity of one who adjures or threatens. 'We adjure you, brethren'—because when we first besought you, you despised to hear; at least now be obedient to our adjuration. An adjuration not in simple word alone, but together with a dread calling upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest perchance an adjuration of merely human words, so to say, might be once more condemned, or its observation not held of any great moment. But, as a most expert surgeon, who with lighter remedies can bring no healing to a gangrened limb, he assays to cure the disease by the use of the knife of the spirit, and tells them to 'withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which they have received of us'. Thus he commands them to sever themselves from those who refuse their proper tasks, and that such should be cut off as members corrupted with the festering vice of idleness, lest this disease of sloth like some deadly contagion may spread its corruption even to the healthy portions of the body. And when he comes to speak of those who refuse to work with their hands, and to eat their bread in quietness—those from whom he bids withdraw—hearken what reproaches he hurls against them from the first. Huge and tremendous is the blame he heaps upon them, when he charges them with refusal to observe what is both present in their memory and what they have learned not only by word of instruction but have also received through the speaking example of deed.

(To be concluded)

'MY WORLD FROM WITHIN'¹

IRENE BELL

THE woman who is abreast of current thought, who knows the topics of the moment, religious and secular, and who follows her daily Mass in her Missal, and the news of the world in her morning paper . . . These words might be a self-portrait of Mrs Boland, the efficient boxtender who organised the sale of pamphlets in Westminster Cathedral from 1912 onwards and who in 1924 founded the Boxtenders' Association.

Nowadays we are familiar with the Catholic Truth Society cases in our churches, and are inclined to take this contribution to present-day propaganda for granted. The origins of the C.T.S. go as far back as 1884—there were various developments—the first meeting was convened in the house of Lady Herbert of Lea, under the chairmanship of Dr Herbert Vaughan, then Bishop of Salford, who had already started a similar project in his own diocese. The date of the foundation meeting was carefully chosen—the fifth of November. This is no place to deal with the history of the C.T.S., it suffices to say that the scheme withstood the consequences of two major wars. Mrs Boland died in 1937 but there was no break in the continuity of the boxtender's apostolate. That an organisation not twenty years old could rally under such difficulties, when the instigator herself was no longer at hand to plan and encourage, is a sure sign of wise beginnings. But the real fundamentals on which the Boxtenders' Association was built must surely have been the serene, cultured atmosphere of the childhood of Eileen Moloney, who later became Mrs J. P. Boland.

The heading of this sketch needs an explanation—fifteen years after Mrs Boland's death an unfinished *Memoir* of 80 pages was accidentally discovered. From what her family remember it was probably written in the early 'thirties. The typescript was then printed by her husband—for private circulation—and given the

¹ Comments and quotations from the *Memoir* of Mrs Eileen Boland—handprinted for private circulation. The author is indebted to Mr J. P. Boland for his help in supplying the material.

title *My World from Within*. As it now stands the booklet gives a complete account of her youth, but unfortunately there is no reference to her active life after marriage, or indeed any mention of the work with which we connect Mrs Boland, public speaking, the Catholic Truth Society etc. Although the final chapter 'Back from Australia' tells of her meeting with her husband and gives a slight reference to her eldest daughter, we are not told about the way in which she combined the duties of wife and mother—she had six children between 1903-1922—or her public life outside her home.

All that the *Memoir* relates of Eileen Moloney's childhood stresses the importance of her early experiences. Her paternal grandparents were from County Clare, and had sailed from Cork at the time when Fr Mathew was at the height of his fame. James Moloney had heard the great Capuchin preach, urging his listeners to accept the discipline of temperance; the young farmer took the pledge and kept it all his life.

On arrival in Melbourne the immigrants went up country and prospered as farmers. They did not allow their three sons to forget about the homeland. James Moloney loved books and devoted Sunday evenings to reading aloud from his *History of Ireland*, occasionally he broke down and was unable to continue the session. The boys had a good education and did well in life. Patrick completed his medical studies and married Ellie Quirk in 1876. The following year on 21st March, St Benedict's day, their only child, a girl was born. She was christened Eileen.

Shortly before Eileen's fourth birthday they moved to a new house, already the child had an alert and intelligent mind. . . . from the *Memoir*. . . . 'Some months before this event (4th birthday) I had learnt to read, I have no recollection of the process, nor can I remember a time when I could not read, but my great difficulty was to tell the time. I was quite old before I mastered the clock and was terribly ashamed at my ignorance, but try as I would the whole business seemed meaningless.'

For a short time Eileen went to a day school, but says all she remembers of it was singing 'Dear Angel ever at my side . . .'. Another striking factor of this time was being told the importance of making Acts of Contrition. Eileen made these wholeheartedly though she did not understand their importance.

When eight years old she made her first confession, at that time

she attended the school of the Faithful Companions of Jesus. Once again the importance of sorrow for sin cropped up. . . . 'We were carefully instructed and above all it was made clear to us that though we had to be sorry for our sins, we need not necessarily *feel* sorry. However, I thought it best to take no risks and set out to *feel* sorry. The saddest thing I knew was grandmother's death, so I examined my conscience and having got the material for contrition, I went back over the sadness of Grandma's death, and worked myself into a state of misery. Then when I was utterly depressed, I suddenly switched on to my sins and added to the general gloom. At any rate I was thoroughly unhappy if not contrite.

'This plan worked very well and then one day it didn't. It was a lovely day and there were good times ahead. Grandma was dead which was very sad and I missed her. But there were compensations. Cheerfulness, in short would keep breaking through and I can still remember my horror at myself as a kind of monster whom neither death nor sin could subdue to a fitting depression.'

Eileen does not mention at what age she was able to follow Mass in her Missal, but her pamphlet, *How to use the Missal for the Laity*, is so very clear and direct, one feels that she herself had a real understanding of what was going on at the altar, and was aware that there was a need for it to be explained in plain English.

In 1886 the Moloneys came over to England, the voyage was not without event. Eileen tells of the embarrassment her nurse caused her; each evening she took her charge on deck and said the Rosary out loud:

. . . 'I used to try my best', writes Mrs Boland, 'to make my response sound like normal conversation, putting a query in "Pray for us sinners", or a note of surprise into "the hour of our death"'. . . .

Whilst in England schooling was continued at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Roehampton, and although the three 'Rs', plus a fourth, Religion must have been in the curriculum, the nine-year-old girl from the antipodes recalls nothing of this period except the novel experience of bathing from 'machines' at Brighton during the summer.

One might have thought that an only child would have rejoiced at school life and the companionship of other young people, but Eileen enjoyed a remarkable harmony with her parents,

especially her father who spent hours introducing his daughter to all manner of subjects, mythology, poetry and literature. Appreciation of art was also stimulated, the hall of their house being lined with Arundel prints.

... 'These we would study by the hour, reading appropriate bits from Ruskin and Pater, searching out the symbolism, finding portraits of contemporaries disguised as saints and onlookers in biblical scenes, or going back to Dante to get the right Italian atmosphere.'...

All this early training was the background on which in later years Mrs Boland based ideas for the striking pictorial covers of the C.T.S. pamphlets. In her work of Boxtender in Westminster Cathedral, she was very keen about colour schemes. It was she who introduced picture covers on a large scale, and there still exists albums of picture-postcards of Old Masters, which had been collected from all sources so as to facilitate the selection of covers for Saints' biographies, devotional pamphlets, etc. Mrs Boland also supervised the designing of special covers.

This interest in art was fostered during the years after the crash in Australia when the Moloneys returned to Europe and travelled. They showed their daughter all that was worthwhile in the countries they themselves had come to value. In 1900 they spent three weeks in Kerry (later Eileen was to marry the Member for South Kerry). Then there was a term at a finishing school in Paris, a winter in Florence and Rome for the end of the Holy Year; Venice, Paris again and Norway.

When over here Mrs Moloney and her daughter had their clothes (except suits) made in Paris, even simple items such as 'une robe pour la Messe de sept heures'. One of the things Eileen's mother made a point of was that her clothes never betrayed that she went in for 'good works'.

For many years Mrs Moloney was threatened with blindness, and consequently her daughter devoted herself to travelling around with her mother, visiting a specialist in Switzerland who gave hope of a cure. In an age when careers were beginning to be opened to women, Eileen Moloney never gave a thought to a life of her own—it was just natural for her to make herself useful to her mother. However, in 1902 Mrs Moloney's sight improved, there was a proposal and Eileen married an Irish M.P., Mr John Boland.

Hitherto Eileen's life had made her conscious of the universality of the Church, Holy Mass being the same sacrifice in Melbourne as in Lucerne, the same in Paris as in Killarney, but now settling down as a married woman she was introduced to another aspect of Catholicism—namely Parish Life. Mrs Boland's first home was in Ashley Gardens, she was therefore a parishioner of Westminster Cathedral.

Married life might have presented practical problems to the young woman who had spent so much of her life in continental hotels, but from the first she had no difficulty in running her home and at the same time taking an interest in the things 'needing doing' around her. In 1910 James Britten asked her to join the C.T.S. committee, regardless of the fact that she already had three small children.

Then she and elderly Mrs Pollen got together and decided they must have a case installed in Westminster Cathedral. This was done in 1912. From the start Mrs Boland was in charge, there were three helpers—the pride they took in their work is evident: one of the boxtenders apologised saying she could only manage to dress the case *three* times a day. A scheme was evolved for being on duty a month at a time. Mrs Boland wrote *How to run a Church Door Case* in order to let others profit from her own experience. She also wrote *The C.T.S. at work in Westminster Cathedral*, which gives many thrilling stories of enquiries and conversions connected with the pamphlets.

In 1924 Mrs Boland founded the Boxtenders' Association. She then frequently called meetings of the members and made a special point of telling fellow workers about new pamphlets *in preparation*, so as to make the boxtenders feel they were really part of the C.T.S. organisation. At the time of writing there are no fewer than 2,500 boxtenders.

When Mrs Boland's husband took over the secretaryship of the C.T.S. in 1926 she volunteered to act as editor of *Catholic Truth* and *Catholic Book Notes* (these are now published as a joint quarterly). Occasionally Mrs Boland wrote special articles in the periodical and of course reviewed books. All this was in addition to attending monthly executive meetings and the four quarterly meetings of the C.T.S. general committee.

These were not her only activities. She was a member of the Catholic Women's League and very closely associated with Miss

Streeter in this work, taking an active interest in a debating class they ran in the early days of the C.W.L.

Mrs Boland lectured a great deal, which she did very well, having troubled to take lessons in public speaking from the famous Elsie Fogarty. I clearly remember hearing her address us at school, once on Boxtending and at another time on 'The Catholic Novel'. It was these interesting and well presented talks, heard many years ago, which made me aware of her personality and infectious enthusiasm.

She also helped other new ventures, for instance, when *The Grail* first came to London Mrs Boland compiled a very fine article on this modern lay-apostolate; it was published in *The Month*, in the spring of 1933, and stands out as one of the rare occasions this periodical used coloured illustrations. There was a strong connection between the C.T.S. and *The Month*, many of the contributions in the latter, especially by Fr Thurston, S.J., reappeared as pamphlets. It was from the Jesuit Fathers at Farm Street, Mayfair, that Mrs Boland drew her spiritual direction.

Many years have now passed since the erection of the first church door case in the Cathedral, records may show profit or loss, but experience has taught the truth in the text from St Paul, chosen by the boxtenders for their motto:

'Neither he that planteth is anything nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.' (1 Cor. 3, 7.)

A TECHNIQUE OF SPIRITUAL LIBERATION*

P.-R. RÉGAMEY, O.P.

I

THE LIMITS OF ANY SPIRITUAL TECHNIQUE

A TECHNIQUE of freedom? The expression is, quite certainly, too strong. A title says what it can, as briefly as it can. Properly speaking we have no right to hope from our own efforts anything but *conditions* favourable to the play of our freedom—let that be clearly understood from the start. Nevertheless we shall see better what we ought to hope from the means, and what cannot be expected of them, if we take up the matter in several different ways.

The word 'means' is wholly valid only when applied to material things. You hit a nail with a hammer and you (who are not clumsy) drive it in, and even do so in such a way that the effect is exactly proportionate to the communication of your energy to the nail and the resistance of the wall. The 'means' is sufficient to the 'end'. But when you ask yourself what you are going to do to become more vitally, more fully free, no-one will teach you the great means of all the means: it is simply to be free. There is no other means, and all that you can do will be worthwhile only in order to vary this means according to the particular case. For what can one find in this world to correspond to freedom if it is not freedom itself? And what can buy or capture freedom? It is free; and grace alone is sufficient for it.

We are warned then at once that we must not expect too much of spiritual techniques. If a technique of this sort pretends to succeed infallibly that is enough to make it suspect. To succeed infallibly is not to make the success a truly spiritual thing. The more sure it is, the more fallacious it is. In saying this we are not amusing ourselves with a paradox, we are using terms in their strictest sense.

And we must say this in respect to all the degrees of the spiritual life, from the most external to the most hidden and sublime.

* Translated by kind permission of author and editor from *La Vie Spirituelle*, July, 1955, by Marion Parker.

To pretend to get by the simple application of rules the exactly right expression in which this life should be made concrete, is to have nothing more than a decorum, not a truly spiritual expression, not works and an action which are the fruits of the spirit, of the Spirit itself. It is simply to have an *academicism*. When it is a question, more deeply, of an inner style of life, there is no success more horrible than the pose, the spiritual gait (even the mastery of psychical and spiritual powers) which certain persons obtain by their disciplines.

In our own time, more than ever, one must be on one's guard. In everything, in the spiritual sphere as in others, we live under a regime of *experiment*. Dr Thérèse Brosse writes,¹ 'The thirst for a conscious realization outside our habitual mechanisms of thought (by which is meant rational mechanisms) is the fundamental note of the contemporary era.' Our time, to be sure, has other 'fundamental notes', but this one is very important indeed, especially for those who try to live by the spirit. We ought to listen carefully to that unpleasant warning of Jung:² 'Modern man wants to experiment with the spirit as the bolshevik experiments with the economy. Confronted by this tendency of the modern spirit every ecclesiastical system, whether it be Catholic or Protestant, Bhuddist or Confucian, is at a disadvantage. . . . (Normal people today) feel, by and large, that our religious truths are in some way hollow, emptied of their substance.' Empiricists and experimenters will always be inclined to judge the realities of faith to be *empty of substance*. For it is the *substance* of things *not seen* (Heb. 11, 1). The new esoterics promise 'the practice of the second state, in the conscious manipulation of a new spontaneity. We wish to be able, they say, to replace the thing given, by a thing constructed, a structure of our own. We do not want to receive, but to do.'³ They will make only a sham, as false as it is bewitching. As for the free giving of the soul to God in its ineffable depths, what worse imposture could there be than to pretend to do that? If you really count on any means, whatever it may be, take care! It will bind you down more and more as its effect seems to you more and more certain and desirable.

¹ In *Yoga*, edited by Cahiers du Sud, 1953, p. 126.

² *Psychological Healing*, p. 285.

³ Abellio in the weekly *Arts*, March 23, 1955.

Two things wholly gratuitous are facing each other here, the grace of God and our freedom. One of them is a mystery beyond our grasp—and to lose oneself in it is healing for it is the mystery of infinite pity, of love which never fails us, of faith never broken.⁴ The other is the riddle of what we are, inscrutable until our eternal 'name' is revealed to us. (Apoc. 2, 17).

This mystery of our freedom, which is that of opening our spirit to the infinite, will suffice to make any means, any technique whatever, inadequate to the only ends worthy of us, the spiritual. The means we make use of will have value only in so far as the end is already present in them, acting in them, by intention. The effect is of the same order as the technique; it is for that reason that an infallible technique is not enough.

If making a book is only a *métier*, 'like making a clock', according to La Bruyère's celebrated *môt*—he well knew that it was much more—the book will be no more alive than the clock. When it is a question of producing works of spiritual freedom. what chance do we stand?

The ancients used to say that art proceeded by determined means.⁵ That is they used to envisage art strictly under its technical aspect: one used to say, 'the art of weaving'; one still says 'arts and crafts'. They were not taken in by this. In any *art*, they supposed always a living presence, a 'genius'. Boileau himself begins his '*Art Poétique*' by invoking 'the secret influence of heaven'. Nevertheless the poetic creation most open to the unpredictable play of inspiration, and most deeply lived by its author is still not itself in the order of *life* pure and simple, in the order of freedom and free choice in which the person makes his destiny. From the beginning and during the whole course of our existence here below, a *shunting* is necessary, a shifting of the points in the choice which Kierkegaard perceived⁶ so profoundly, between a life which is, in the last resort, merely aesthetic, even *ironic*,⁷ and life as such. One is the life of pure knowledge, of techniques, of *works*

⁴ Here we recognise the fundamental theme of all the themes of Holy Writ, which the Hebrew expressed by the word *Berith* (too partially translated by *Covenant* or *Testament*).

⁵ *Per certas vias*.—'Every true technique is in itself infallible and necessarily produces the result it aims at, supposing all the conditions are fulfilled.' (O. Lacombe, *Revue thomiste*, 1951, p. 136.)

⁶ *Either this good or that good*, particularly the last study of this collection: 'The balance between the aesthetic and the ethical in the elaboration of personality'.

⁷ I shall be excused for directing attention again to my old article, 'Irony and the Christian sense', *La Vie Spirituelle*, December, 1937. I should today bring to it certain siftings and ramifications, but at least it exists.

at which one aims; the other is the life of love. Love has need of light, and of disciplines, and of a certain experience of that which it loves, and of some experience of itself, and it needs to bear fruit.⁸ But without love, existence is only vanity, whether it remains flat and spiritless or whether it gains in intensity.⁹ Love does not need to be illumined by the Christian faith to know by experience that no experience can satisfy it, that no technique therefore can suffice for it. It tends always beyond what it touches, beyond what it does, and that is enough to disqualify, as far as its value as a life goes (because witnessing to a lack of love), a life which proposes as an end, the simple realization of itself in beauty. But there is something more serious involved here; for true love has always the nature of an *oblation*: it cannot rest in the spiritual effects which it experiences; for to be satisfied in them is to shut itself up in their pleasure, however spiritual that may be, whereas it tends always to open out in the pure *gift*. *A fortiori*, charity offers the whole of its supernatural vitality, in contrast to techniques which would aim at procuring a conscious realization of the self. The fulfilment of the Christian can be only in faith and hope. It is that of one still unknown to himself, accomplished in God, infinitely mysterious. It takes place in the realm of the perishable, in the instability, the precariousness of life here below. Any hope in spiritual techniques is illegitimate if, at bottom, it is not accompanied by *abnegation*, which is the very entrance to the play of Christian life (Lk. 9, 23-24), and if it does not dissolve in the supreme hope of being 'known by God'¹⁰—beyond the joy of every conscious knowledge.

Underlying this problem of spiritual techniques one is aware of the problem of spiritual experience. Whoever says technique in effect says experimentation. Decisive enactments on the subject

8 One of the major themes of the Gospel. So Mt., 3, 8, 10; 7, 19; 13, 8, 23, 26; 41; Lk., 8, 15; 13, 7; Jn, 12, 25. Must not our Lord's last miracle before his Passion be as significant in its intention as his first, as a conclusion in action of his teaching? Now this is the drying up of the fig tree on which he found no fruit—a miracle intentionally bizarre, after the manner of the prophets, in order the more to strike the imagination; it was not the season for figs: Mk, 11, 12-14 and 20-14 (where one sees also that this fruitfulness is obtained by prayer in virtue of faith). Cf. Spicq: 'The Christian must bear fruit', *La Vie Spirituelle*, June, 1951.

9 For Gurdjieff, for instance, there are three men in us, but none of them loves spiritually. The first is the *psychic* man, the second the *emotional* man, the third the *intellectual* man. The higher states are reached by 'labour' starting from one of these three. There is no love except the emotional (or sensual). (Oupensky, *Fragment of an Unknown Doctrine*, p. 113.)

10 Another great theme of the New Testament: Cor., 8, 2-3; Gal., 4, 9; 2 Tim., 2, 19.

of Christian experience have recently been made by M. Jean Mouroux in a great book.¹¹ It is apparent there that Christian experience, and even any spiritual experience which is so, cannot be reduced to the verification of what one experiences—to the *empirical*—or to what one obtains voluntarily—to the *experimental*. It is 'the experience of the person in his contact with the God who is Person.'¹² It allows then in two ways of a passing beyond itself. M. Mouroux is thus led to coin a new word for a case equally confusing in the facts of experience, the word *experiential*. This term is applied to experience 'taken in its personal totality, with all its structural elements and all its principles of movement, an experience founded and laid hold of in the clarity of a consciousness which possesses itself and in the generosity of a love which gives itself.'¹³ It is essential to Christian experience that it go beyond the experimental.

There is therefore something of an injustice in the pretence of so many spiritually minded people, who complain of the insufficiency of techniques of liberation in our western world, equipped as it is with so many material techniques. We are going on to say what foundation there is in this regret, in this complaint. But at bottom it is unjust, because the desire frustrated is itself radically illegitimate. The complaint is that religion no longer offers 'any method, any concrete discipline for attaining that state of plenitude of which the saints and mystics speak'.¹⁴ But the saints and mystics have never taken for an end this plenitude itself. They are unanimous in preferring the least act of love in darkness to all the illuminations and all the experiences, in preferring the communion itself to the fervour which one can feel from it, unanimous in repeating that the 'happy encounters', as St John of the Cross called them, are unforeseeable graces of love, of God, never the success of our efforts.

II

THE NECESSITY OF A RENEWAL OF TECHNIQUES

Nevertheless we must pay attention to what there is, so to

¹¹ *L'Expérience chrétienne*, Aubier, 1952 (v. particularly ch. I, II, IX, X, XI).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ The words are Paul Sérant's, in Pauwels's *Monsieur Gurdjieff* (reviewed in *La Vie Spirituelle*, May, 1955), pp. 295-6. How significant is the title of Keyserling's book, *From Suffering to Plenitude*.

speak, legitimate in our contemporaries' pretence. Let us listen to their complaints.

Appeals like that of Katherine Mansfield to her husband awake in us an emotion which demands to be taken seriously. 'Do you like living the old mechanical life at the mercy of everything? Living only with a minute portion of yourself?'¹⁵ There is incompleteness, as if non-existence in the personal sense, division.¹⁶ If the modern world encourages 'personages' and excites 'push', if it gives too much weight to too much of the *ego*—one set of selves coming into conflict with another set, and all obscuring the self deep within us—if the abundance of shoots, going off anarchically in all directions, is exhausting the sap of the tree of life in us, we are not wrong to hope from religious practice some remedy for this evil, nor to be astonished and disturbed if, on the contrary, the evil overtakes religious practice itself.

Religious codes of behaviour have been too much regimented by the modern world. To the spiritual man religion manifests itself as a system composed of dogmatic formulas and abstract notions to be given intellectual assent, of orders to be obeyed, of feelings which cannot always be experienced sincerely, and of excessively external practices.¹⁷ Some put the emphasis on some of these elements, others on others, and inside each of these four components, 'tendencies' are at war. And there is a great deal of concern to find the best 'adaptations'. Now it may be supposed that the integration and theoretical equilibrium of all these given elements, even when it would be deficient, in the more customary religious codes, is what matters most to a normal flowering of the spirit. But are we so sure of this? What is the spiritual nostalgia which increases in many of the best people in proportion to their living in a Christian *milieu*? It is a nostalgia of the 'heart', and the psyche. Usually religious codes of behaviour, statements of ideas, expressions of feelings encourage neither the awakening of the psyche nor the opening of the 'heart' in Pascal's sense of the word (which is that of the whole human tradition, even before Christianity and parallel with it), that is, in the sense of the most secret

¹⁵ Quoted by Louis Pauwels, p. 250.

¹⁶ A striking expression of this misery and of aspiration towards self-fulfilment, *ibid.*, pp. 10, 14-16, 22, 69-73, 78-9, 231-3.

¹⁷ I have developed this point a little in *L'Art Sacré* of September, 1953: 'Of what spirit will you be?' There, certain pictures make it obvious. It is the real reason for the decadence of religious art. Affectations of being 'modern' will not change it. Quite the contrary.

recesses of the soul.¹⁸ Let us take this word to mean the spirit, an indissoluble gaze and love, deeper than ideas and feelings and the distinction between them. Faith, hope and charity are virtues of the 'heart'. But most often, alas, they manifest themselves only in the form of ideas and sentiments which deaden instead of awakening the mysterious faculties of the 'heart'.¹⁹ If many Christians are seduced by charlatans it is because these offer them methods or a tempting training in psychical realization, and promise to open 'the eye of the heart', while experience in the Church pays off its account, as far as this is concerned, by a miserable sham.

The spiritual man, to be sure, since he must *live by faith*, must be capable of surmounting such shams. The Church will always give the nourishment essential to his faith. His regrets are in the order of experience, and we have reiterated enough that faith is beyond that. But a life against the current is not a normal life, and in the normal life experience has its part to play.²⁰ The spiritual man is right to be sorry that the Church *as we have made it* does not easily appear as a *milieu* favourable to the life of the 'spiritual senses'. One of the most urgent tasks which must be taken in hand is the amelioration of this religious *climate*. The experience which the faithful have of the Church must become one of divine love translated into every human term. For myself it is specially the distortions of regular religious life, the blemish of art called sacred, and the general mediocrity of preaching which have made me aware of this defect of 'heart' and of the psyche; they are the symptoms of it, battering grossly upon the eyes of those who can *see what they see*.

In all this it is never a question of anything but the *conditions* in which freedom may be *exercised*, and we have stressed from the beginning of this article that it is only over them that means and techniques of spiritual life have power—not over freedom itself, no more, obviously, than over grace. But the part these conditions play is very important.

God's grace *makes us free* (In 7, 31-36 etc.). Now if it really

¹⁸ See the excellent volume of *Etudes carmélitaines* which is devoted to this subject.

¹⁹ I refer to the traditional doctrine (specially Greek) of 'spiritual senses', on which the essential things are said in the book by Mouroux quoted above.

²⁰ A part assigned considerable importance by Mouroux particularly in the chapter on 'spiritual perception'. It would have been interesting to exploit in this chapter the results of modern psychological studies, which have shown how the affective is necessary to the success of all the actions of life.

makes us free, it allows that this freedom should be really *ours*, in some sense other than the sense that it would be *obtained by us*, since it would come, on the contrary, from grace. It is not conceivable that grace enters in some way as a mere concomitant of freedom. *It gives us to our freedom*. Now this, our freedom, is governed by human conditions, which are not those of God—if one can talk about divine conditions!—nor those of angels. ‘Freedom under conditions’—that is the formula for human freedom. These conditions are not only spiritual. They are also *psychological, corporal, social and cosmic*. Our task is to *dispose* all, in as much conformity as possible with the accordingly complex laws.

Now there are two qualities necessary to a spiritual technique: one is that of *openness*, through the presence of the free spiritual end, without measure, in the very act of having recourse to a means; the other is that of *rigour*, in the just choice of means and in their application.

On the one hand the means will not be spiritually effective unless they are animated by the sense of God, by the demands of the spirit, and unless charity makes of them much more than *means*—and I insist on the fact that there must, in this way, be charity *in the very acts* in which it makes use of the means. Let charity be there *in the act*, and the means are already becoming effectively *the realization of the Spirit, made concrete in, minted in, the conditions of our earthly life*. Yet on the other hand the means must correspond properly with what really are the conditions. Now in the four orders we have mentioned, those of our mind, of our bodily behaviour, of our participation in the life of society and of the world, we have learned much that the masters of the classical periods of spirituality did not know (there are also things which we have forgotten and must learn again). Moreover, the conditions themselves are considerably changed. Our modes of bodily and psychological behaviour, the assumptions which govern our dealings with the universe and with our fellowmen, many ways of thought, surely demand readjustment.

Let us consider, very briefly, the new factors which render obligatory this readjustment of means in the spiritual life.

First of all there is an immense increase in knowledge. Here especially, and rightly, there comes to mind all that we have learnt unassailably from depth psychology, but also the data of other human sciences, all the data which Alexis Carrel attempted

to synthesize just twenty years ago and in the extension and understanding of which a good deal of progress has since been made. To such data must be added what has come to us from spiritual environments other than that of our modern western world: from ancient forms of our own traditions, better understood; from antiquity, from the middle ages here in the west; from related traditions, especially that of the Christian east; from the chief human traditions as such—especially the traditions of ancient Egypt and of India, this last still a vital tradition today;²¹ from the 'primitives'. . . . We have no longer the right to live as if we knew nothing of all that has come to us from so many horizons and depths.

But it is a question of much more than knowledge; the conditions which govern our lives have changed and with them conceptions and mentalities. The upheaval which has been going on for a century in what the geographers (following Vidal de la Blache) and the sociologists call 'ways of life' is quite certainly more extensive and more radical than all the changes which have taken place in them from the stone age to the nineteenth century. The conditions in which the spirit has to live in the modern world are of essential importance to how our spirit should live. The era of the masses carries for us a double risk from which we cannot escape: the risk of becoming alienated from ourselves in the social hubbub, and the risk of a flight from it into interiority—in general the risk on the one hand of dissolution, on the other, of a hardening of ourselves in reaction against the world. . . .

And still we have not mentioned the most important thing. What, in the most immediate way, controls our conduct is the change which has taken place in the structure of human personality. Let us note only a few aspects of this change which are specially decisive.

The conscious mind has become more reflective. This is a great step forward, but it gives rise to very serious problems. All that a primitive man, a man of antiquity or of the middle ages, and the simple in recent times did naively, has to be *thought*. The twentieth century man must *give himself a reason for it*.²² Left to

²¹ My next article will pose the *question* of a 'Christian yoga'.

²² In all spheres fidelity to the traditional spirit obliges us to make such distinctions. So, on the subject of mortifications, D. Dubarle, in *L'Ascèse chrétienne*, Cahier de la Vie Spirituelle, pp. 244-259. And on the subject of worship, my article, 'The Unanimous Prayer' in *L'Art Sacré*, November, 1953. If one cries out at 'subjectivism', at 'psycho-

their own simple functioning, traditional practices, now that it is necessary to renew the *consciousness* of them, have no longer their former spontaneous effect.

Unfortunately reason sets itself up in a terribly indiscreet fashion. Modern man, as Péguy said, 'plays the know-all'. He wants everything to be explained, and he wants to explain everything, and he rejects what he does not 'understand', which is usually the most precious. He needs to rediscover, according to his own mode, a certain *art of informed attention*, which is *much more than rational* and which we shall try to introduce. It will be applied to *recognizing* the operation of the techniques most favourable to spiritual freedom. We shall need to take a *real cognizance* of them, and by 'real' I mean that we shall test out in ourselves as we now are, as individuals and as communities, the most normal codes of behaviour. In the Church all conduct must become a full and sincere 'experience of truth'. There is not a practice which does not need to be rediscovered, lived, in a new fashion, in terms of what we have now become—in terms of our actual disgrace (in order to emerge from it) the disgrace of being overmastered by the vastness of the new world, of being torn apart by it—and in terms of the wonderful possibilities for which, in regaining stability, we must prepare the way.

The *overvitalized* man of former ages has been replaced by human beings who are often *devitalized*, often too sensitive, nervously unstable, overworked. Their discipline will be very different, notably in regard to penance and in the attempt to regain their equilibrium. In all respects the most serious thing is surely the blunting of *attention*. The effective exercise of freedom is worth what *attention* is worth.²³ How can spiritual life stop being reduced among the majority of us to emotions and excessively abstract ideas, both of an astonishing variableness, to fanciful intentions and a great deal of external agitation? How shall we become capable of that ordered *élan*, that coherent

logism', if one imagines that the vocation of religious of the old Orders and of those of the faithful who attach themselves spiritually to them carries essentially the spontaneity of ancient times, if one rejects (that is self-evident) the reflective consciousness as a contamination of 'modern spirituality', this is quite the contrary of the simplicity preached.

²³ One is stupefied when one considers the contrast between the incalculable practical value of this principle and the feeble (or non-existent) part it plays in spiritual doctrines and spiritual formation. The learned keep it for themselves in a state of thesis. It has been set forth magisterially by Jean Laporte, 'Free will and attention according to St Thomas Aquinas', *Revue de Métaph. et de Morale*, 1931-1934 (an article each year).

and constant movement onwards and upwards which great lives make?

In the play of so many disturbing factors 'spiritualities' are suffering a crisis. The most affected are the 'modern' ones, that is to say those which have been elaborated since the end of the middle ages. They are suffering irremediably from the false intellectualist and volitionalist presuppositions which dictated them. They were beneficial only lately, corresponding to a mentality which was that of their times but which sustains them no longer. As for the traditional means which remain officially in use in the old orders, they scarcely operate any better. They correspond well to the reality of this 'human compound' which is man. But, generally speaking, they cannot be practised as at the time of their institution, in antiquity and in the middle ages: conditions of life, mentalities, physical constitutions and especially psychological constitutions are too much changed. One *adapts* these means as well as one can and that is useless. It is their total *transposition* which is needed, according to the new structures of life and personality. This is perfectly possible but the spirit is not there; for one sees everywhere religious doing as they please about the most essential of means, a means which is of all times and all circumstances, more necessary today than it ever was, silence. These religious seem extraordinarily unconscious of what is at stake, little disposed to understand how urgent it is to restore these means, *renewed*, revitalized. The majority dissipate themselves in disordered and useless activity, in a tumult of 'ideas', without any *real* knowledge of things, unconscious of *inner dimensions*, with little sensibility to *quality* of life. . . .

It is apparent then how deeply and widely it matters that the techniques of the spiritual life should be restored among Christians.

Some coherent picture of the directions in which codes of conduct must be orientated seems then desirable and even necessary. It will, inevitably, be provisional in character since the chief factors of change are still at work. But an *initiation* into what is surest and most nearly indispensable in any spiritual technique which attempts today to be normal and beneficial has a chance of retaining value for long enough.

This task is evidently one of those to which the modern reaction is immediate: 'It needs a team of specialists'. This is the academic

reaction—the university reaction if you like. Certainly for an academic work, calling for academic panegyric and revision, we need ‘a team of specialists’. And we know only too well the kind of report which this sort of team draws up. It elaborates those truths of which Nietzsche said that they ‘come to nothing’. The question is whether there are some among us who try to *live* taking into account the chief and (I insist on it) elementary data we have. If so, why should not one of us try to grapple with and synthesize his perception of what *living the life itself* suggests to him is essential and valuable for us all? Teams of specialists? It is for each one of us to see to it that the specialists from whom we get our instruction form a real *team*, a team which operates at last, while up to now it has been an academy. One of us may manage to change what he has learnt from them into what Gandhi called ‘experiences of truth’.

(To be concluded)

Catholic Evidence Questions and Answers

BY CECILY HASTINGS

10/6 net

Anyone who expounds the faith on the street corner faces two tests. He must have a living, accurate grasp of the Church's teaching, or hecklers will soon have him in a tangle; he must be intelligible, or he will find himself without an audience. Cecily Hastings brought to the handling of the *Catholic Herald* questions column a thorough training in that exacting school; put it together with a collection of really searching questions—the kind which, if evaded, make a man's faith taut and touchy, but, when faced, turn from stumbling-block into stepping-stone—and you have a book which really demonstrates how theology is everyone's business, as the Church insists—everyone's richly interesting and vital business. The book is in two parts. As the author points out, no question about any part of Catholicism can, ultimately, be adequately answered without bringing in the whole; and it is with a brilliant thumbnail sketch of that whole—what is the Church and what her significance for man?—that the book opens. Against this first affirmation of mystery follows the second part—the answering of questions—set out in the pattern of the first: God, creation, man, Christ, the Church.

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THE PLACE OF THE LITURGY IN THE PLAN OF SUPERNATURAL ADOPTION*

F. A. MCGOWAN

THE Liturgy is a great subject, sometimes an inflammatory one, known to generate devotion, enthusiasm, even heat. But there is a possibility of avoiding the controversial, making the study exploratory, seeking out the facts and their relations which help us to live better the life of union with God. So, for security reasons, it is well to begin by putting liturgy in its place by defining terms.

Liturgy is the Church's official dispensation of the Mysteries of Christ. It is the 'whole body of the official prayers and sacramental actions whereby the communication of men with God is carried on in the Church'; 'the life-dispensing, life-preserving, and life-restoring activity of *Ecclesia*, the Mystical Christ'. In less technical words: *Liturgy is the official communication of divine Life by Christ through the Church*. The liturgy consists of four inter-related parts: the sacraments, the sacramentals, Divine Office and ritual prayers, and the Liturgical Year—all centred in and drawing their source from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which, as the re-enactment of Calvary, is the core of the liturgy.

Let us analyse the definition: the official communication of divine life by Christ through the Church. That definition is more than logical; it is dynamic because it deals with life, divine life. Logically, the definition distinguishes liturgy, marks it off as part of a whole. The operative word is 'communication'. Liturgy is not an end in itself; it is a *function* with divine union as purpose. Moreover, it is a doubly restricted function. The first limitation is that of *agent* because liturgy is confined to the communication of grace *through the Church*. Though the *normal* and full means of our participation in divine nature is through the organized Visible Body of Christ, it is not the only means. To say so would be to fall into the Boston heresy which forgets that God is free to use any channels he chooses for communicating divine life to souls.

The second limitation of liturgy is that of *mode*. Liturgy is the

* First of a series on the Liturgy given to lay Adult Education groups.

official means, the corporate, the organized, the formal means of dispensing the Christ-life. But it is not the only way by which the sanctifying work of the Church is extended to regions and spheres of influence. It is the *official* mode of communication by which the Church fulfils her *office* of transfusing the members of the Mystical Body. We can pause a moment on the word 'office', *officium* in Latin, which is often translated 'duty', as in the Mass of the Sacred Heart, 'duty of reparation'. But *officium* connotes a scale of responses, of obligations based on one's position in relation to another person or to an institution, say, the state. It ranges from burdens accepted under duress to self-imposed sacrifices freely undertaken by eagerness of love. And a word on officers or officials—they suppose rank and file. We must not allow our imaginations to limit the Church to the clergy and members of religious orders. Every baptized person shares in the priesthood of Christ though there are recognized degrees.

We said that the liturgy is the *formal* mode of communicating life. Any formulated process is expressed externally through ceremonial and ritual. Unfortunately, the externals of liturgical worship, the rubrics, are too frequently rated as the liturgy itself. Many of us were amused in Bruce Marshall's *All Glorious Within* by the Scottish lady convert who carried a missal the size of an encyclopaedia and by the expert whom the author inaccurately labelled

... a liturgical scholar who knew exactly how a Benedictine abbot should sing a Pontifical High Mass on a double of the second class in the presence of a Cardinal Archbishop of the Ambrosian rite (p. 83).

It is to be hoped that there will be no disappointment if this article does not give household hints for arranging candles, trimming surplices, training altar boys, or even cultivating a taste for Gregorian Chant. These externals are good and necessary. God is interested in these *as details*. Pope Pius XII reminds us in the encyclical *Mediator Dei: On the Sacred Liturgy*, referring to *Leviticus* (which gives embroidery directions):

Thus we observe that when God institutes the Old Law, he makes provision besides for sacred rites, and determines in exact detail the rules to be observed by his people in rendering him the worship he ordains. To this end he established various kinds of sacrifice and designated the ceremonies with which

they were to be offered to him. His enactments on all matters related to the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple and the holy days are minute and clear. He established a sacerdotal tribe (of Levi) with its high priest, selected and described the vestments with which the sacred ministers were to be clothed, and every function in any way pertaining to divine worship. (English edition, *The Catholic Mind*, June 1948, Section 16.)

Externals of liturgy should be treated as externals. The dialogue Mass and the use of the vernacular or local language have their reference because they implement *corporate*, co-operative worship; the liturgy is *the* corporate, co-operative worship of the entire Mystical Body, Head *and members*, dispensing the Mysteries of Christ.

Mysteries of Christ—we come to the *matter* of the liturgy. The term must be explained because in the definitions given above it has been equated with divine life, that which makes liturgy a dynamic function, the word 'life' has an abstract tinge, suggests other abstractions—force, energy, or vitality, a derivative from 'life'. The diction of the Early Church, preserved in the liturgy, uses a concrete term which not only means Christ-life but indicated his historical years on earth when he 'shaped divinity to human form'. This term is the Mysteries of Christ, or more frequently and more simply, the Mysteries.

In doctrine class we learned that a mystery in the *intellectual* order is a divinely revealed fact that we cannot fully *understand*. Though we habitually use the term 'mystery' in the operational order¹ we rarely stop to consider the distinction. A mystery in the operational, activity order, is a divine fact or action whose meaning *and power* can never be exhausted.

Mysteries in religion, unlike those of escape fiction, are never completely solved but they are alike in this: the more absorbed we are in them, the clearer, the more satisfying, and the more thrilling they become. The clue to the Mysteries of Christ is his divine personality. That raises the fundamental question: Can the life of Christ be limited to the time between the Annunciation and the Ascension? The answer is negative; that would be only his historical life on earth. From all eternity, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, he lives the Trinitarian life. He became man at the time of the Annunciation and we call the time between the Annunciation and the Ascension his historical life, always

1 Cf. Humbert Clérissac, O.P., *The Mystery of the Church*. New York, 1937, p. 7.

remembering that from the moment of the Incarnation,, his sacred humanity has been united to his divinity and will be so throughout eternity. Since his ascension into heaven when he 'set at the right of thy glory the substance of our frail human nature which he has taken to himself' (Ascension Mass, *Communicantes*), he lives the glorified life and he is Head of the Mystical Body. It is the same *person* who lives in these different modes and also sacramentally in the Holy Eucharist.

Yet many a so-called 'Life of Christ' goes no further than offering our Lord as a 'model of perfection'. They forget that There can therefore be no contemplation of God that is not also a concrete supervital union. . . . God cannot be the passive object of any creature's knowledge or will (E. I. Watkin, *A Philosophy of Form*, London, 1935, p. 369-388).

The study of the historical life of Christ is infinitely different from that of the greatest hero or saint. The most that a great hero could do for his followers would be to inspire them with enthusiasm to use the powers they already possess to copy him in his best actions. Our Lord not only shows us *how* to act but he gives his own power with which to act and to become the unique person which he intends each of us to be. When our Lord performed the acts of his historical life, he had each of us in mind and we now draw graces from those acts. Since we can never exhaust the meaning and the power of his acts, we call them 'mysteries'. We apply the term *Mysteries of Christ* to the events of Christ's life, or to the Mass where they were re-presented, when we wish to emphasize the fact that the words and acts of a Divine Person cannot be limited by time or space but continue to be actualized in the Church, especially through the celebration of the Mass.²

For example: on a certain day, in a certain town, our Lord cured a particular man of leprosy. The essence of that divine-human act continues when he acts in the Church through the sacrament of Penance forgiving sins, or when he offers us actual grace with which to correct our damaged nature.

² Cf. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., *The Life of the Church*, New York, 1933, p. 19. 'The heart of the Christian mystery is this, that the Christ who was both God and man, has determined to extend His life from the terrain of Galilee and Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, and His span of days from thirty odd years to the end of time; and He is to bear the same relation, as far as that is possible, to human individuals which His divine nature bore to His own soul and body. There is one fundamental difference, of course: His own soul and body had no human personality, whereas we, no matter how close we live in the divine life, remain persons, able to say: "No longer I live but Thou."'

These Mysteries of Christ are ours because Christ lived them to redeem us; he lived them to communicate his divine nature to us; he associated us with him in his Mysteries as he lived them; he has made them accessible to us through the liturgy, especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

With this analysis of the liturgy—its divine matter, its communication function, its purpose of divine union—we can now place it in the Divine Plan of Redemption.

THE PLAN OF SUPERNATURAL ADOPTION

God is. 'I am Who am.' That fact is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega of all things. That relationship to the creator gives a dignity to the creature which we sometimes fail to attribute to ourselves. We come from the Trinity; we live by the Trinity, we go to the Trinity.

Trintarian Life: From all eternity there is one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, knowing and loving each other.

Creation: To show forth his goodness and to share his happiness, God made out of nothing other beings, each a unique reflection of himself.

This should be a stimulus to each one. He reflects God as no one else does. God is so great that all the trillions of creatures can never represent all his aspects. In heaven we shall see them in the Beatific Vision as vistas of God's glory.³ While here on earth we are not certain what we are supposed to be and we want to be like someone else. Instead of a depression diet of wormwood because I am not so beautiful as a movie star, not so popular as a crooner, not so *evidently* holy as the parish saint, I can console myself with the fact that God sees himself in me in a way that he does not see himself in anyone else. As was said earlier, in each event of his historical life, our Lord was thinking how each of us would use its essence, as it comes through the liturgy, to become this unique reflection he has planned each of us to be.

Elevation of chief creatures: To further share his happiness,

3 Cf. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *L'éternelle vie*, Paris, 1949, p. 312f; and D-M Nothomb, 'Afin d'embrasser l'univers', *La Vie Spirituelle*, May 1955, p. 454: 'Tous sont des idées de Dieu réalisées, des actes d'amour de Dieu, puis des objets de son amour. Dieu notre Père est comme un miroir où nous retrouvons le visage de chaque homme; non seulement son visage, mais son âme, mais ce qui fait le plus intime secret de lui-même, là où seul Dieu pénètre. . . . [The 'new name' which perfectly describes each one's relation to God.]

God raised angels and man above their natures to a created participation in the divine nature, that is, to the state of grace.

Grace is defined by Saint Peter (II: 1, 4) as a created participation in the divine nature. Nature is defined as essence in act. God cannot share his essence with us. No matter how closely we become united to him, we shall never lose our identity. But he does give us created participation in his nature, he does give us the capacity to *act* with his power, he does dwell in us and *act through us*. This bestowal of his nature raises angels and men to the state of adopted children of God. Normally, men receive this gift through the liturgy.

Defection of Creatures: Some of the angels and Adam, the head of the human race, refused this supernatural gift of God.

They wished to have it by right of their own nature. The bad angels made their choice with full knowledge of the consequences and they have never gone back on their decision. Adam and Eve repented. It required the God-man to restore grace.

Restoration of Divine Life to Man

In order to repair to his Father for the offense against Divine Love, and to restore Divine Life to mankind, the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, became man, was born of the Virgin Mary, and by his life—especially his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension—redeemed the human race.

Note that the citations of the Mysteries in the Canon of the Mass do not end with our Lord's Death but continue, mentioning the Resurrection and Ascension. Some liturgies even include the Sending of the Paraclete. Our Lord did not come to earth just to die for us but to restore life to us. Paradoxically the Easter Sequence sings:

Death and Life strove in extraordinary duel—

The Prince of Life dead, now lives and reigns.

That restoration was for the whole race, every member of it, yet no member may be saved against his will or without his personal effort. Therefore, our Lord must devise a way for applying Calvary to each of us personally. He instituted the Church, a new mode of life, in which individuals in every place, until the end of time, can contact Calvary. The Church was born when the Sacred Heart was pierced. As Pope Pius XII so concisely and beautifully words it,

Lifted up between heaven and earth, he offers the saving sacrifice of his life, and pours forth, as it were, from his pierced Heart the sacraments destined to impart the treasures of redemption to the souls of men (*op. cit.*, Section 17).

The Life of Christ Prolonged in Time and Space: The God-man now in heaven, is the Head of the Mystical Body, the Church through which he continues until the end of time his life of teaching, directing, and sanctifying individual persons.

Communication of Christ's Life to Individuals: The official distribution of Christ's life is the liturgy by which Christ through the Church communicates to individuals by four inter-related parts—the sacraments, the sacramentals, the Divine Office, and the Liturgical Year—the grace of Calvary because the centre and source of the liturgy is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is the Mysteries of Christ that the liturgy communicates, his Trinitarian life, his historical life between the Annunciation and the Ascension, his glorified life at the right hand of the Father, as the Head of the Mystical Body which is the prolongation of his historical life in time and space. The sacraments are the continuation of his God-giving actions—bestowing, restoring, increasing sanctifying grace. The sacramentals are the continuation of those actions by which he transformed material objects from possibilities of harm into means of grace. We recall that God gave Adam charge of the material world. When Adam submitted to Satan, he surrendered this sovereignty but, since the Incarnation, the objects that we use in our work-a-day life can be changed from the state of harmful or of merely neutral to that of implements for the Christ-life. The Divine Office and Ritual Prayers are the continuation of Christ's words of formal prayer. The Liturgical Cycle—spiral not just repetitious—is our gradual growth in Christ through participation in the recurrent actualization of his mysteries.

The centre and core of the liturgy is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the source of divine life, where the *reality* of *all* the mysteries of Christ is made present whenever it is celebrated. All four parts of the liturgy are related because they draw from the same source for the divine life they communicate, from the Mass.

There are also related in the process of dispensing Christ's life. Sacramentals are blessed by ritual prayers and are used in the

administration of all the sacraments, in the recitation of Divine Office, and in carrying out the Liturgical Year. Some sacramentals are practically incorporated into the Proper of the Mass—the candles at Candlemas, the ashes on Ash Wednesday, palms on Palm Sunday, the Paschal candle at Eastertide; others are outside the Mass but associated with it, as the blessing of throats with special Saint Blaise candle, the Christmas crib, and the like. The Divine Office, an extension of the Proper of the Mass, is the prayer-setting for the Holy Sacrifice and changes seasonally through the Liturgical Year.

Co-operative Development of Christ's Life: It is not sufficient to passively receive Christ's Life through the liturgy; we must deliberately and continuously co-operate with actual graces, exercising and developing the supernatural virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost received at Baptism.

We must use the divine power received through the liturgy to keep the Commandments, to practise the temporal and spiritual works of mercy, to observe the duties of our state of life, and then to develop a sensitive ear to the suggestions which our position, our *officium* as adopted children of God, indicates for the eagerness of love.

Now co-operation with grace has the effect of increasing one's capacity for grace. Suppose that the reward for winning a race were not the gold medal, purse, and, or renown, but an increase in speed. Every response to grace not only makes one more God-like but gives a greater capacity for divine life. And God will always supply.

Beatified Share in the Trinitarian Life: According to the capacity for God which each one has acquired by the moment of death, each will enjoy forever the life of the Blessed Trinity in the Beatific Vision.

REVIEWS

ABRAHAM NOTRE PÈRE. Par Joseph Lecuyer, C.S.S.P. (*L'esprit Liturgique*, 8.)

AINSI PARLAIT QOHÉLET. Par Jean Steinmann. (*Témoins de Dieu*, 15.)

PIERRE ET PAUL À ANTIOCHE ET À JERUSALEM. Par H. M. Feret, O.P.

Les Editions du Cerf, 1955; n.p.

These three volumes, of similar format (but not content), would of themselves be proof of a great growth of interest in the Scriptures. Such works would not have appeared, and did not appear, in the France of fifty years ago. The rôle of Scripture in the liturgy as in the living of our Catholic lives has become more apparent. It is good to think that there is a public which will read such works. We can only hope that such a public will grow and grow, and not merely remain an élite which scarce impinge upon the paganised millions all about them.

Abraham Notre Père is the fine fruit of a number of spiritual conferences given to the priest students at the French Seminary in Rome. The author himself calls his book a spiritual biography of Abraham, meditation on the mission and virtues of him who remains the father of our faith; and the meditation is conducted in the light of traditional Christian thought and Catholic theology. Such indeed the book proves to be, and we are given admirable chapters on the vocation of Abraham, on the journey to Canaan, Abraham in Egypt, Melchisedech, faith which justifies, etc. Particularly pleasing are the frequent and apt references to passages in the Fathers, Councils, or works of St Thomas. All through we are convinced that the author is fully in step with the mind of the Church, and that he is helping us to acquire a deeper appreciation of the stories of the Patriarch Abraham, the friend of God who has meant so much in the designs of God. Could we but know and understand more about Abraham, then we should have ground for friendship with God. The book is admirably constructed and well rounded off with indexes of Bible texts, of authors cited and of liturgical passages.

Ainsi Parlait Qohélet is a lively presentation of that book of the Bible better known to English readers as Ecclesiastes or The Preacher. Ecclesiastes is as fascinating as it is enigmatic. So the present work pilots us through the more than usually strange problems of authorship, date and composition, in an engaging way that savours not at all of the manual. Rather is it an immensely readable biography of an unknown author together with an analysis of a work which is at once quixotic and the inspired Word of God. We are presented with a sketch

of the Jewish milieu which might have produced Ecclesiastes, and suggestions about the age-old common stores of philosophical ideals, whether Babylonian, Egyptian or Hellenic—to all of which Jerusalem Jewry would not have been so closed as is commonly thought. Our author stresses the phrase 'all things under the sun', for this would represent the limited spiritual horizon of the Preacher who is very much concerned with *this* life and only seems to sense a vague sheol beyond. Be that as it may, we are shown how Ecclesiastes represents the highly personal reflections of an old man who has seen and known and had to swallow much. Our present book reads better than many a novel; we can hardly help being happily driven to read Ecclesiastes again—than which there is no better praise for an introductory book of this kind.

Pierre et Paul à Antioche et à Jerusalem has as subtitle *Le 'conflit' des deux Apôtres*. That there was a conflict is indisputable (cf. Gal. 2, 11 & 14), but we are taken aback when our author reads a bitter thrust of St Peter into '... our dear brother Paul ... in all his letters, in which there are some things difficult to understand' (2 Peter 3, 16). Our confidence in the work is somewhat restored when the author turns to a fresh and business-like examination of the texts at issue, mostly in the wake of Lagrange. The pages on the *genre littéraire* of Acts (pp. 55-57) have a quality of newness, and seem valuable. The author then discusses the warp and woof of events which led to the common triumph of both St Peter and St Paul. There were not two victories but one, which was really that of their and our Lord Jesus Christ.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

JOAN—DAUGHTER OF GOD. A Psychological Study. By Mary Angela Jeeves. (A. H. Stockwell Ltd.; 9s. 6d.)

Joan came from the forest-clad hills of the Vosges and always rejoiced in the beauty of nature and the freedom of the open air. Her love of religion and quietude was testified to by parish priests, girl friends and other peasants. Her family was poor but not destitute, and she was often at daily Mass and always punctual. She loved bright clothes and enjoyed the fine dresses, seen later at Court. It is noteworthy that the typical colour of the village dresses at Domremy was red, and the author remarks that it is a principle of human life that matter *must* be used in the service of man, who receives all his knowledge through the five senses; and that the family and place from which we are sprung must contribute largely to the kind of person we are and the type of sanctity which we develop. It depends on us whether we respond to the challenge of holiness or merely reproduce the more or less monotonous round of material life in which most of us are born.

There was a spiritual vigour and freshness about Joan which must have contributed to the ease with which she persuaded the most unlikely persons to do her will and this on the assumption that her way was best. She ordered her life according to the communications made to her by her 'Voices' and had no idea of allowing those to whom she was sent to do otherwise.

Some reader may be repelled by the insistence throughout on parallels between her life and that of our Lord, but this is due merely to the realization of the fact that he, God the Creator and Redeemer of the world, really shared our common humanity and showed us the Way by which we should walk, as well as the truth which is our guide and the life—our reward. As the Psalmist says: 'Who is the man that desireth life, who loveth to see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil and do good: seek after peace and pursue it.' It was in this way that St Joan integrated her naturally buoyant character and was never known to speak evil of anyone. Even her persecutors she treated with charity, while peace was ever her goal, though the way to it lay through the waging of a truly 'just war'.

It is perhaps a mistake to attempt to estimate the relative greatness of the saints. All 'partake in the divine nature', and all must integrate their natural gifts by way of holiness, 'Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord'. It would perhaps be truer to say that St Joan was a most 'human' saint, and that our Lord was most human just because he was divine. Further than that the comparison should not be pressed. It is sufficient to say that she had the Christ-like *quality*, and possessed to a heroic degree the love of God and of her neighbour, while she shared wholeheartedly in the joys as well as the sorrows of the common life, rising in the end through her faith and sincerity to the death of a martyr and a saint.

The book, slight though it is, becomes a reminder to the world of today of that supernatural life which we all possess and to which we must be faithful if we are to obtain the joys of heaven. Another psalm comes to mind as we put it down. It is the 23rd, which occurs three times in the Divine Office—on Mondays at Prime, in the common of a Virgin and Martyr, and in the Matins of our Lady. The Psalmist asks: 'Who shall go up to the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in his holy place?' The answer fits St Joan, whether at court or camp or in the prison where she was confined in circumstances of the utmost brutality: 'The innocent in hands and clean of heart: who hath not taken his soul in vain nor sworn in guile unto his neighbour.'

There is a curious misprint on page 90: '1494' for '1431'.

J. M. SCOTT

NOTICES

A RETREAT WITH OUR LADY. By C. Polloi. (Sands; 5s.)

The sub-title is 'A Study in the Theological and Cardinal Virtues' and this describes the book better than the title. It is familiar, attractive, theologically-flavoured spiritual direction for pious souls. The virtues are considered one by one, not from the point of view of our Lady all the time (which one rather expected) but each virtue on its own merits. Mary is *with* us all the time but hardly in our thoughts. The last 38 pages (out of 178) are a development of the idea of Mary's *Fiat*. This is perhaps the most useful part of the book. But every page contains something both useful and practical and the uninspired, somewhat un-English style and presentation are fully compensated by the frequent little shafts of light which shoot from the most unpretentious paragraphs. A good little book for side-reading during an eight-day retreat or even for a chief source of a retreat's meditations.

G.M.C.

Père Paul Philippe's *La très sainte Vierge et le Sacerdoce* has gone into a second edition. This is good news for students of Marian doctrine who wish to complete their store of source books on the subject and who missed it in 1945. It has not been revised, as far as one can see, glancing through, in the light of subsequent work (Laurentin, Neubert, Gallay) but perhaps in the nature of things that was not desirable. It is about the way our Lady influences the daily life of the priest and is therefore a good devotional work with a theological foundation. It is better in French than in the English translation (*The Blessed Virgin and the Priesthood*, Mercier, 1952).

FILS DE L'EGLISE (Editions du Cerf; n.p.), is a recent addition to the series 'Problèmes Modernes d'Apostolat', in which Louis Lochet devotes 257 pages to an exhaustive analysis of various aspects of the Christian apostolate in the contemporary world. Most of the chapters were published in *La Vie Spirituelle* between 1949 and 1954. The author insists that his book contains nothing original: that it is merely 'a series of reflections grafted on to everyday life and based upon common experience'. He hopes that, just because he writes from the point of view of the average Catholic, his books will be helpful to others who work and suffer in the service of Christ among their brethren in the world. The first chapter, devoted to the sort of intellectual and spiritual temptations which must at one time or another come to almost every Catholic in these days, is well worth careful reading. In fact, there is a great deal on almost every page that helps to strengthen the faith and hope of the disillusioned worker for Catholic Action, who—to use the

current expressions—is 'fed-up' and 'browned-off'. The final chapter entitled 'Contemplations', stresses that the so-called 'Contemplative Life' is not reserved to enclosed monks and nuns, and that unless lay apostles realise this fact, their work for souls will be almost useless.

THE PICTORIAL STORY OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL (Burns Oates, n.p.) is a pleasantly produced brochure with many striking photographs intended primarily as a guide to visitors. But the letter-press by the Administrator, the Very Rev. Mgr Gordon Wheeler, as well as the illustrations are instructive for anyone interested in the recent development of Catholicism in England. We miss, however, any clear picture of Eric Gill's Stations, the romanesque character of which seem to fit so admirably into the total structure; and many would like to see a criticism of the final plans, the marble and mosaic *versus* the beauty of the unfinished brick. His Eminence Cardinal Griffin contributes the Foreword, pointing authoritatively to the main function of the building—'a powerhouse of prayer where the Divine Liturgy is celebrated with true devotion in all its rightful splendour'.

EXTRACTS

In *CROSS AND CROWN* (Chicago) for September Father Bandera, editor of the Spanish *Vida Sobrenatural*, suggests that one of the dangers of modern piety is 'naturalistic spirituality'. It is based, he says, on a reversal of the order of grace and nature.

One readily recognizes that it is entirely necessary and proper for man to exercise every capacity of human nature in the practice of virtue. Human nature has found its most redoubtable champion in the Catholic doctrine that grace does not destroy nature but rather heals and perfects it. Naturalism proposes a revision of that principle. It is now suggested that human nature does not serve grace but, on the contrary, grace should be at the service of human nature. It is nature which is the queen and mistress of the Christian highway. His phraseology (or is it the translator's?) is not clear; but the point he makes is important since often in our desire to rescue human nature from destruction by the puritan or manichee we are inclined to forget its mortal wounds inflicted by original sin. The pendulum of doctrine will forever swing. But the remarks of Father Bandera serve as a defence to the attack on religious life on the plea that marriage is more in accord with nature. The Pope, here quoted with effect, has several times pointed to the danger of the modern attack on religious life from this angle. Naturalism, however, might also appear in the over-emphasis of

certain aspects of liturgical prayer, and in some of the other movements which are doing great things in the Church today. It is a question of balance, for the moral virtues are in question and they have to follow the golden mean.

Evangeliser (Brussels) for September-October contains a short communication on the 'Piano and the Altar'.

Those who have attended recital by a true musician—a great pianist for example—will have been impressed by the moments preceding the playing of the work . . . I mean that recollection into which the musician sinks, once he is seated on his stool, his eyes fixed on the piano. A physical recollection in which all the energies of his body are marshalled and disciplined, in which his attention is concentrated, in which his soul is set in tune. The musician, one might say, enters a sort of state of musical grace. Nothing exists for him except this work which he is about to make live again.

And this recollection is communicated to the audience. The last claps have died away; the crowd also is set in tune. In advance, caught by the contagion, they share in this approach as to something sacred.

This picture strikes us forcibly, often cruelly, when we watch some priests ascend the altar. This time it is the most authentic 'Sacred' with which we are concerned. It is the Mystery that is about to be accomplished, the meeting of God and his people through the ministry of the priest. Now we are no longer dealing with the interpretation of a great master to the audience, but the other Christ, in the midst of the Christian community, through whose instrumentality Christ living and glorious is about to renew the eternal Pasch. If there ever was a moment that commanded recollection of every action of every thought it is there. And if there ever was a moment when recollection should be contagious, it is this. Is this always so?

The priest who chats in the sacristy with his confreres or with the sacristan until the moment when the clock strikes the hour for mass, then goes to the altar snapping his fingers to call a wayward acolyte to order, drops his biretta on the altar step, clambers up to the altar, flicks open the missal and gets fussed over an undiscoverable commemoration . . ., is such a priest 'in tune'? Is he set in a 'state of mystery'? . . .

The comparison is a striking one, and should make both priest and congregation examine their consciences.

THE COMMONWEAL (New York, weekly) for September 16, provides first hand evidence of devotion among the Poles behind the iron curtain. Mr Kumlien visited Czestochowa for a feast day.

On the bastions primitive confessionals were erected in rows, with a short distance between each, to take care of the tired pilgrims upon their arrival, for this was no room in the churches and chapels. Some of the priests had to hear confessions three or four hours or more without interruption, and such were the crowds that confessions continued throughout the night. . . . In the chapels communions were distributed by the tens of thousands. In some chapels pilgrims could be seen outstretched in the form of a cross on the cold marble floor, their faces downwards, according to an old Polish practice, in order to fulfil a vow. As the dusk was falling a procession was formed on the bastions, several miles long and led by the clergy and several bishops. . . . In the gathering night a crowd was assembling round the shrine, everyone with a burning candle in his hand, a crowd so enormous that it finally looked like a sea of flickering lights . . . more than two hundred thousand people had gathered.

It is hard for Catholics in the West to imagine what this atmosphere is like; it most reminds one of a frightened child clinging to its mother. It is a passionate tribute to the past, to what appears as firm and lasting, a tribute which more and more becomes a single flaming protest against the present.

A Pole who was assisting at the ceremony beside Mr Kumlien assured him that their faith and spirit is greater than ever before, and that with these they have won the battle.

SURSUM CORDA is a monthly periodical, published in Australia (editorial 45 Victoria Street, Waverley, N.S.W.) by the Franciscan fathers, for Priests and Religious; and *Aliis Tradere* is a Spanish spiritual review recently started for Dominican Tertiaries (Bogota). These are signs of the times—spiritual reviews seem to be springing up like bulbs in spring, and this must mean that an increasing number of people all over the world are becoming interested in deepening their faith, their prayer and their Christian life.

SUPPLEMENT of *La Vie Spirituelle* (No. 34, 15 September) deals with spiritual direction once more, specialising this time in direction of married people. This is an important development as too many works on spiritual direction seem to visualise the religious or at least the single layman or laywoman as the subjects of direction.

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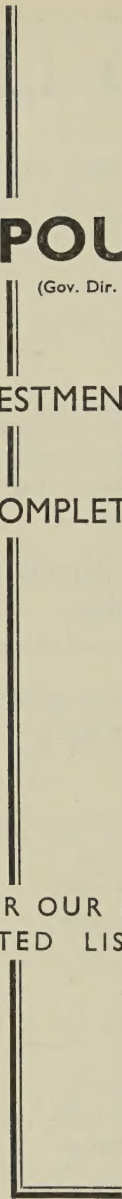
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